


# Scoping Assistance – PDEA

Transportation Planning Branch		Approved: May 19, 2008 Version 1
[Contents]		
<a href="#">Purpose</a>	<a href="#">Warnings and Precautions</a>	
<a href="#">Background</a>	<a href="#">Resources and Tools</a>	
<a href="#">Responsibility</a>	<a href="#">Contacts</a>	
<a href="#">Policy, Regulatory, and Legal Requirements</a>	<a href="#">Glossary</a>	
<a href="#">Scheduling and Time Constraints</a>	<a href="#">User Access</a>	
<a href="#">Procedures</a>	<a href="#">Flowchart</a>	

## ***Purpose***

The purpose of this procedure is to describe how the Transportation Planning Branch (TPB) handles notices of scoping meetings from the Project Development and Environmental Analysis (PDEA) Branch, and the responsibilities of TPB staff.

## ***Background***

Scoping meetings are held to discuss the scope or extent of a proposed project.

Six to eight months prior to setting up a Scoping meeting, the PDEA Project Development Engineer schedules a **Project Initiation Meeting** (PIM) to begin collecting information about the proposed project. This meeting includes representatives from the various NCDOT Branches (including the Transportation Planning Branch) and the private engineering firm (if applicable). The PDEA Project Development Engineer coordinates with the TPB Staff Engineer to provide contact names for the appropriate TPB Regional Planning and Traffic Forecast Group representative.

For the **Scoping Meeting**, if a PIM is held, the PDEA Project Development Engineer includes the designated TPB representatives identified for the PIM. If no PIM was held, the PDEA Project Development Engineer coordinates with the TPB Staff Engineer to provide contact names for the appropriate TPB Regional Planning and Traffic Forecast Group representative. The TPB Regional Planning and Traffic Forecast Project Engineer's primary role is to be a resource for systems level project planning information.

## ***Responsibility***

The **PDEA Project Development Engineer** is responsible for the following activities:

- Coordinating with the TPB Staff Engineer to obtain contact names for TPB (this occurs prior to the PIM)
- Providing and distributing information for review prior to the PIM.

- Scheduling and conducting the PIM.
- Scheduling and conducting the Scoping Meeting.
- Distributing the [scoping information sheets](#) for review prior to the scoping meeting.
- Documenting the PIM and the Scoping Meeting with meeting minutes, and distribution of the minutes.

The designated **TPB Project Engineer and TPB Traffic Forecasting representatives** are responsible for the following activities:

- Collecting and providing the requested information for the PIM and/or scoping meeting.
- Attending the meetings when possible, and informing PDEA when they will not be at the meetings.

## ***Policy, Regulatory, and Legal Requirements***

None

## ***Scheduling and Time Constraints***

The PIM is held at least six to eight months prior to the Scoping Meeting. The scheduling of the meeting should be such that there is time for the PDEA Project Development Engineer to request and receive the Traffic Forecast prior to the Scoping Meeting. The appropriate STaRS networks should be checked to determine the minimum time needed to allow for this Activity.

## ***Procedures***

### **PROJECT INITIATION MEETING**

Procedure Input – Project Information

Procedure Output – Transferred information; Area of study; Traffic Forecast Requirements

The Transportation Planning Branch staff should follow the steps below to support the Scoping process.

Step	Action
1	The PDEA Project Development Engineer contacts the TPB Staff Engineer. The <b>TPB Staff Engineer</b> provides the PDEA Project Development Engineer with the names of the TPB Regional Planning and Traffic Forecast Group representatives who serve as contacts for the remainder of the project.
2	The <b>PDEA Project Development Engineer</b> schedules the PIM. Information Packets (hard copy) are sent to the designated TPB Regional Planning and Traffic Forecast Group representatives. The meeting should be placed on the designated representative's calendars.  The Regional <b>Traffic Forecasting Supervisor</b> either chooses to attend the meeting, or sends a representative. If a representative is sent, the designated Regional Traffic Forecast Supervisor will remain the point of contact until an official traffic forecast request is made and the forecast is assigned.  If the designated <b>TPB Project Engineer or the Traffic Forecasting Supervisor</b> (or representative) will not be able to attend the PIM, they should contact the PDEA Project Development Engineer prior to the PIM to let them know and provide any pertinent information (as noted below).

3	<p>Prior to the PIM, the <b>TPB Project Engineer</b> reviews and collects the appropriate information that will be discussed during the meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) or Thoroughfare Plan. TPB provides a copy of the Plan Technical Report and a copy of the Plan maps. Specific information to be discussed will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Status – complete, currently in update, outdated, etc.</li> <li>– Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) update schedule (for Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs)), including lapse date</li> <li>– Local development patterns (information used to develop CTP/Thoroughfare Plan)</li> <li>– Local issues that arose during development of CTP/Thoroughfare Plan/LRTP – concerns or support for project implementation</li> <li>– Environmental issues considered during development of CTP/Thoroughfare Plan/LRTP</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Air quality status (non-attainment, maintenance, or attainment for Ozone, PM2.5 or CO). Specific information to be discussed includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Horizon year(s) – when project is expected to be complete</li> <li>– Recommended cross section in conformity determination</li> <li>– Conformity schedule and lapse date</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Unique characteristics of the local area/project vicinity</li> <li>• Traffic forecasting tool(s) used to develop CTP/Thoroughfare Plan/LRTP – travel demand model (TDM), hand allocation, trend line analysis, etc. and assumptions that were included in the development of the Plan</li> <li>• Traffic projections that are readily available – information in the study report (daily link volumes or other information that may be useful prior to the project traffic forecast). It should be noted that the assumptions for this traffic is different than that which will be used in the Project Level Traffic Forecast.</li> <li>• Any existing Problem Statement (system-level purpose and need) – discussion and determination of problem statement needs</li> <li>• Role TPB would like to take in Scoping Process</li> <li>• Whether or not the facility is identified as a Strategic Highway Corridor</li> <li>• Other information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– TPB provides information about who's who in the community and key groups that should be involved</li> <li>– PDEA provides insight into the priority of the project to the department or other special needs that they foresee during project development. If it is a high profile project notify TPB up front.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Prior to the PIM, the appropriate regional <b>Traffic Forecasting Supervisor</b> reviews and collects the appropriate traffic forecast information that will be discussed during the meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Previous traffic forecasts that have been completed for the project – discussion and determination of traffic forecast needs</li> <li>• Role TPB would like to take in Scoping Process</li> </ul>
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	<b>Note:</b> If the designated TPB Regional Planning and/or Traffic Forecast Group representative(s) is/are unable to attend the project initiation meeting, the information requested above should be sent to the PDEA Project Development Engineer prior to the meeting.
<b>4</b>	The PDEA Project Development Engineer conducts the PIM and documents and distributes meeting minutes.

## SCOPING MEETING

Procedure Input (developed by TPB) – TPB Problem Statement; Traffic Forecast data. (There are other inputs developed by other Branches. See [PDEA Scoping Procedures](#) for a full list of Inputs)

Procedure Output (collected by PDEA Project Development Engineer) – Transferred information; Schedule; Type of Document; Merger Process

Step	Action
<b>1</b>	The PDEA Project Development Engineer distributes the scoping information for review prior to scheduling the scoping meeting. The designated TPB Regional Planning and Traffic Forecast Group representatives review the scoping information sheets and provide any necessary feedback.
<b>2</b>	<p>The PDEA Project Development Engineer schedules the scoping meeting and sends the scoping memo with scoping information sheets to NCDOT units consistent with PDEA procedures.</p> <p>This information should be sent (hard copy) to the TPB contacts identified in the PIM process. (The regional TPB Planning Group Supervisor and the State Traffic Forecasting Engineer (STFE) should NOT be included in the Scoping meeting unless they either attended the PIM, or special circumstances require their attendance.)</p> <p><b>Note:</b> If the designated TPB Regional Planning and Traffic Forecast Group representatives are unable to attend the Scoping meeting, the PDEA Project Development Engineer should be informed prior to the meeting, and any requested information transmitted.</p>
<b>3</b>	The PDEA Project Development Engineer conducts and documents (with minutes) the scoping meeting.

## Warnings and Precautions

If the PIM is not scheduled with sufficient time for the Traffic Forecast to be developed prior to the Scoping meeting, the project schedule may be delayed.

## Resources and Tools

- [PDEA Scoping Procedures](#)
- [Scoping Information Sheets](#)

## Contacts

- For suggestions to change this procedure contact: Earlene Thomas (919) 733-4705 ext. 47

- For questions about performing this procedure contact: Earlene Thomas (919) 733-4705 ext. 47

## **Glossary**

- Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) – Series of maps mutually adopted by a local area or MPO and NCDOT to meet NC General Statute 136-66.2 requirements for a transportation plan.
- Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)
- Project Initiation Meeting (PIM) – A Project Initiation Meeting is a small initial meeting with key NCDOT staff to transfer project history and pertinent information to PDEA staff to help begin the Scoping process. At this meeting, the area of study is first identified and the type of traffic forecast is determined.
- Scoping – Scoping is a formal process that determines the scope of issues to be addressed for planning a project. It identifies the significant issues related to the proposed project.
- Scoping Meeting – A formal meeting with NCDOT staff to solicit input from each Branch/ Unit for the proposed project. The goal of the meeting is to fully develop the scope of work that is required by the proposed action.
- Scoping Memo – A memo that is sent to NCDOT staff to invite them to the Scoping meeting and to solicit input from their Branch/ Unit.
- Strategic Highway Corridor (SHC)
- Travel Demand Model (TDM) – The use of mathematical equations to simulate the transportation system. The simulation follows trips as they begin at the trip generating zone, move through the network and end at a trip attracting zone. This is typically a four step process that includes: trip generation, trip distribution, mode split and network assignment.
- Problem Statement – Documentation from the CTP process of a deficiency being addressed that can be used as the starting point in the NEPA/SEPA process and provides a substantial core for the *Purpose and Need Statement*.

## **User Access**

NCDOT Internal Use Only

## **Flowchart**

None